



**Fw: WWW report on M-44 incident: dog killed, Texas, 2011**  
**Norman Spurling** to: Anne Overstreet

09/06/2011 01:20 PM

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----- Forwarded by Norman Spurling/DC/USEPA/US on 09/06/2011 01:20 PM -----

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<http://www.globalanimal.org/2011/07/13/feds-device-poisons-wildlife-family-dog/45161/>

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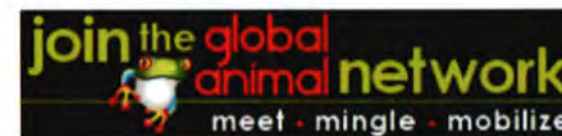
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## Feds' Device Poisons Wildlife, Family Dog

(ANIMAL NEWS) TEXAS – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services places M-44 sodium cyanide devices along trails, fence lines and roads to protect livestock and other threatened species from predators. Unfortunately, the poisonous devices can also be triggered by endangered animals and innocent pets, like the Walker family's dog, Bella, and even children. Read on to learn why this indiscriminate killer needs to be immediately banned. – Global Animal

### Predator Defense

Beginning February 18, 2011 the Walker family's idyllic country home in Texas no longer felt like the haven they had believed it to be.

That day Predator Defense was contacted by Angel Walker and her husband J.D. about the poisoning of their beloved dog, Bella, by an M-44 sodium cyanide device placed by the USDA Wildlife Services just 918 feet from their house. The Walkers have two sons who could also have been harmed or killed by this device—one is a typical curious 11 year-old.

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Photo Credit: Predator Defense

Predator Defense immediately sent the Walkers the EPA M-44 use directives for the use of these dangerous devices. We also asked them to photograph and document the placement of the M-44s, that killed Bella and other M-44s that were still loaded in the area, in proximity to their home and road ways. Violations of the directives include an M-44 that was placed on a roadway that the Walkers use daily. And at least four other M-44s were within plain sight of roadways—just 6 to 10 feet away.

Despite being notified of Bella's death, Wildlife Services reset this device twice within the next two weeks. Mind you this is less than 1,000 feet from the Walker's house which they share with their 11 and 18 year old sons.

Learning that the M-44s were being reset, Predator Defense went beyond advising the Walkers and contacted the Texas state director of Wildlife Services, Michael Bodenchuk. After initially being told Mr. Bodenchuk was not available, Predator Defense Executive Director Brooks Fahy asked that a written message be delivered to him at which point he became available. He was dismissive about the case. Brooks let him know that it was not in Wildlife Services' best interest



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to continue using M-44s in this location after the death of Bella.

The ramifications of Wildlife Services' callous disregard for public safety was strongly conveyed to Mr. Bodenchuk. In no uncertain terms Brooks told them that Wildlife Services' reckless behavior was being closely followed and documented by Predator Defense.

One hour after that phone call all M-44s in the immediate area had been removed, as were dead coyotes that had been hung along the fence line of the road that the Walkers use to reach their home. We assume that the coyotes were initially placed there to intimidate the Walkers. Seeing these dead animals on the fence upset the Walker's sons.

★  
-002 A gray fox was also killed by one of the M-44s near the roadway and left there to decompose. This is another violation of Wildlife Services own protocol and directives. This species is typically not targeted for predation on cattle. The fox's death, along with Bella's, is an example of the indiscriminate nature of M-44s and how they kill any animal that pulls on them whether it is a beloved pet or an endangered species.

Under advisement of Predator Defense the Walkers contacted the appropriate state and federal agencies—The Texas Department of Agriculture, USDA Wildlife Services, and the EPA. M-44s are registered for use by Wildlife Services through the EPA. Now the USDA Wildlife Services and the Texas Department of Agriculture's pesticide inspectors are investigating Bella's death.

From the information we've gathered, including photos, it is obvious that Wildlife Services ignored EPA directives regarding the placement of M-44s and required warning signs. Wildlife Services used absolutely no common sense to avoid this tragedy from happening in the first place. Before Bella went missing the Walkers were not informed that M-44s were being placed near their home. This is not the exception but rather the rule when it comes to USDA Wildlife Services and their use of M-44s.

This case is yet another example of why we need an immediate ban on these deadly devices. Please contact your representatives and urge them to cut Wildlife Services funding for lethal predator control programs nationwide.



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